

Zarina Bhimji

Tessa Verheul

De Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam

In contrast to the saying "Home is where the heart is," the migratory situation and the experience of living in-between cultures is often visualized with the image of a disrupted house. Video artists Isaac Julien and Eija-Liisa Ahtila, among many others, strategically manipulate gravity, make walls fall apart and camera's tumble, to express dislocation and identity. Theorist Homi Bhabha has discussed American artist Renee Green's use of architecture, and specifically staircases, to express liminality and post-colonial identity. This same feeling of liminality can be found in the work of the Ugandan/Asian artist Zarina Bhimji, who in her photography and video installations focuses remarkably often on windows and doors as symbols of transition.



De Appel Arts Center in Amsterdam presents two impressive video installations of Bhimji, which together express the migratory route of Bhimji's father who left India and traveled to Uganda. *Yellow Path* (2012), in which several architectural settings perform a leading part, poetically investigates former colonial times in India by combining history and fiction. The editing creates a rhythm between scenes inside and outside, shot on four locations in India, from old Victorian offices in Bombay to a desert landscape in Rann of Kutch and houses in Gujarat. The buildings are empty and only details refer to their former function. In between the inside and the outside shots, Bhimji focuses on hallways, windows through which we cannot see due to the window shutters and doors that remain closed. The beautiful images are accompanied by sound recordings of a speech by Jawarharlal Nehru on the independence of India, set to the noise of a typewriter.



While a certain feeling of nostalgia dominates in *Yellow Path*, *Waiting* (2007) is more intense. We are now in Eastern-Africa, yet again the locations are not without colonial reference. Close-up shots of a factory, where sisal is produced, create unease. *Waiting* lacks the comforting atmosphere of *Yellow Path* and makes the experience of dislocation painfully tangible.